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History

HOBART HISTORY NEWS

HOBART HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOBART, INDIANA

No. 46, May 1988

GREEN THUMB SALE! PLUS POTTERY!!
May 14 and 21, 1988
10 a.m. - 3 p.m. - At the Museum

One sure sign of spring is the Hobart Historical Society's annual Green Thumb sale, to be held this year on Saturdays, May 14 and 21. There will be an assortment of plants, including unusual varieties. We are also featuring our stoneware pottery - pots for your plants, big mixing bowls, and a variety of casseroles and other pieces. The stoneware bread pans are especially popular; even heating and easy clean-up are the features we like best.

Donations of plants are needed to make this sale a success. And you are another important ingredient for success. Do plan to stop in.

AT THE MUSEUM

The past few months have been especially busy at the Museum, with many visitors each Saturday. A lot of work is going on during the week, too. Under the direction of Cal Shearer, repairs and renovations to the lower level are underway. The hallway at the bottom of the stairs was the first project. Leakage has been corrected and the wall has been panelled with wood where the plaster had deteriorated beyond repair. The area now has a very attractive appearance. Cal and his crew, Dick Smith and Al Gawthrop, are now tackling the main room on the lower level and are planning a Main Street of displays.

On the main floor, one of the north windows was blown out during recent high winds. Thanks to the prompt attention of George Buzinec, the opening was boarded up and to Smitty and Carl Lazzaro of Lazzaro Glass who were able to repair the original frame and replace the glass with plexiglass. Our appreciation also to Ray Shudick for electrical work at the Museum and to Mike Ellis of the Hobart Park Department for grounds work. Their interest and efforts in maintaining our National Historic Landmark building benefit all.

In April the College of Architecture and Planning of Ball State University conducted a study and workshop on downtown revitalization in Hobart in cooperation with and under the sponsorship of the Hobart Main Street Association. The Society was represented in the planning, provided historical information for the project, and conducted a walking tour of the downtown area for the Ball State group. In the group's preliminary community profile, Hobart history was well represented among the lists of Hobart assets. The well-maintained historic museum, downtown Hobart commercial architecture, the Hobart Historical Society, and the intact, original historic fabric of the town all came in for favorable comment. Since the Society's purpose is the preservation and promotion of interest in Hobart history, we are most pleased that Hobart history is recognized as an important asset to our community. The Main Street Association also counts historic preservation as one of its objectives and we are delighted to cooperate with this active group in pursuing our mutual interests.

MY AMBITION. . . CLASSES OF 1936 and 1937.

Mary Killigrew recently sent us copies of the Senior edition of the high school newspaper *Ho-Hi Life* for 1936 and 1937. Graduating seniors were asked about their ambitions for the future. Now, 50 years later, we wonder how many of these ambitions have been filled?

Graduates and their ambitions include: Lynaya Bell - to be a homemaker, Vincent Boyd - to be just like Papa, Jo Bracken - to be a school teacher, Carl Fiester - to own a town movie theater, Roberta Fleck, to be an air hostess, Bill Holzmer and Francis Redar - to be an undertaker, Tom Jones - to be a barber, Bob Krull - to be a surveyor, Shirley Mason-Everitt and Bernice Moll - to be an authoress, Jarvis Peddicord - to be a lawyer, Harold Rippe - to be a druggist, Marian Zander - to be a beauty operator, Joe Anders - to own a super- charged Duesenberg, Robert Passow - to be a chemist, Eugene Beckner - to be an artist, Virginia Frye and Luella Sonntag - to be a nurse, Margie Glynn - to be a stenographer, Ruth MacPherson - to be a modiste, Kenneth Pope - to play in a dance orchestra, Marie Sweet - to be a stenographer, Richard Worthington - to be a supervisor of public music, and Iris Zelenka - to be a guitar teacher.

E.J. & E. TRAIN WRECK

(from the Hobart Gazette, March 10, 1899)

"Perhaps the most destructive wreck in the history of the E.J. & E. railroad on this end of the line occurred last Thursday evening about 7 o'clock at the Deep River bridge. The company had been hauling cinders to improve the embankment constructed last year and four empties stood on the track and were to have been pubshed to Hobart by this freight train but the dispatcher failed to give the engineer orders to do so and as a result a loaded freight train of about 30 cars collided with the empties upon the embankment just west of the new bridge. The empties weren't discovered until within a short distance of them and the engineer and fireman did not jump but fell to the cab floor and abided their time. Two of the empties were smashed to smithereens and one was pushed nearly to Hobart. The engine tender passed over the bridge which was completely wrecked allowing some 12 loaded cars to be pushed by the force of the train into the river. It was a deplorable sight but fortunately no lives were lost.

"Many of our citizens went down to the wreck the next morning and all were surprised to see the engine standing near the river and wondered how it escaped the fate of the cars.

"Albert Hancock was a passenger but didn't realize what had happened until he emerged from the caboose."

YOUR OLD HOUSE

If you are interested in the history of your house, you may find *The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture 1890 - 1930* by Alan Gowans of interest. This book, just added to our Library, treats the various styles of houses built by contractors and local carpenters and even by purchasers themselves, using plans and specifications - and sometimes whole kits of precut parts - ordered through the mail. More than half the book is devoted to classifying these houses into categories of styles: American Foursquare, Prairie, Bungalow, Saltbox, Shingle, Tudor and Gothic. The book notes the vintage of the style and documents its source. There are over 200 illustrations, many from mail order catalogs from ready-cut houses.

LAKE COUNTY FAMILY HISTORY PROJECT

A project to publish a new history of Lake County, Indiana and its people has been announced by Steve

Lake County Family History Project (continued)
Yaros, project director, assisted by Ana Grandfield, coordinator for the seven library districts in the county, and Bruce Woods of the Lake County Historical Society. The history will be published in three parts: North, Central and South Lake County. Hobart is included in the North Lake County volume.

Past and president residents of Lake County are invited to submit their family histories for inclusion. Each story of two double-spaced typewritten pages and one single column picture will be published free of charge. Additional charges are made for additional text and photos. The book itself is $49.50 and up, depending on style of binding chosen. No deadline or publishing date has been announced. For more information, write to Steve Yaros, P.O. Box 266, Schererville, IN 46375.

HOBART OFF THE MAP

One of the reasons the Hobart area was attractive as a settlement in the 1840s was that it was a crossroads for transportation by land. Its location on high, dry ground enabled travelers to avoid the swamps and dunes to the north of Hobart. The Chicago-Detroit-New York road (Old Ridge Road) passed through the west end of town and Hammond's tavern at Main and Front streets was a stagecoach stop. Roads to Michigan City, Valparaiso and Crown Point also routed through Hobart. In addition, a number of Indian trails wound through town. Deep River, too, offered possibilities for water routes before and during Indiana's canal era. And finally, the arrival of railroad transportation via what became the Pennsylvania Railroad brought truly convenient transportation to and through Hobart.

Traffic, first by wagon, stagecoach and foot and later by automobile, was important to many Hobart businesses - retail stores, livery stables and garages, restaurants and hotels. In the 1920s, the Hobart Commercial Club was instrumental in establishing a campground on the east end of town for motorists passing through. At its peak, the campground hosted over 2000 visitors each summer as travelers pitched camp for a day or two along the road. (Remember, motels hadn't been invented yet!)

But then the traffic stopped. "Hobart and Wheeler 'Off the Road Map'" announced the *Gazette* on November 23, 1923. What had happened? The completion of the Lincoln Highway to the south and the Dunes Highway to the north provided better through routes. "Predictions to City Council that completion of Lincoln and Dunes highways would result in traffic missing Hobart have become manifestly true, affecting Wheeler more than Hobart at this time. It is said a through car is almost a curiosity now in Wheeler and its traffic is purely local. Since the opening of the Dunes Highway last September, through traffic through Hobart and East Gary has dropped off about 99%.... Hobart, Wheeler and East Gary will be "off the road maps" for future through traffic."

New through routes through Hobart became an important item on the agenda for those interested in city improvements. At the same time, other doors were opening. Although the growth of Gary and the expansion of industry in Gary and the western parts of the County diminished Hobart's importance as a manufacturing, trade and transportation center, the development of streetcar lines connecting the cities and town of the region made it easier for people to live farther away from their places of work. Hobart experienced a building boom as people working in the surrounding area sought a pleasant, quiet place to live. Hobart, the bedroom town, was born.

HOBART'S FLAG TRADITION

The display of American flags which decorates Hobart's downtown area is an old tradition in Hobart. In 1924, the American Legion, formed by returning World War I veterans, purchased 60 American flags and instituted the flag display on Main Street. (*Hobart Gazette*, June 27, 1924.)

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TO: Mrs. Walter Isakson, Treasurer
Hobart Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 24
Hobart, IN 46342

Here is my annual contribution of $_____ to help preserve the past, present and future of Hobart History.

Senior Citizen Member. .	$ 1.00	Contributing Member . .	$ 25.00
Youth Member	2.00	Institutional Member . .	50.00
Personal Member	5.00	Century Club Member .	100.00

NAME:_____

ADDRESS: _____

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WANTED!

1949-50 Hobart High School Annual

See: Dorothy Ballantyne, Museum Director

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